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THE CHOIRMASTER'S MANUAL

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THE
Choirmaster's Manual

A GUIDE

FOR

BUSY AND AMATEUR CHOIRMASTERS

ESPECIALLY FOR THE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOY'S VOICE

AND FOR THE

TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE OF BOY-CHOIRS

BY

HAROLD NEWTON CLARE

NEW YORK
G. SCHIRMER
35 UNION SQUARE
1908

G. SCHIRMER. THE BOSTON MUSIC CO. BOSTON, MASS.
26 & 28 WEST ST.

Mus 393.6

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3/23/81

To My Brother

ARTHUR J. CLARE

ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER
OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE
BALHAM (LONDON), ENGLAND

PREFACE

"A theory that is not the outcome of successful practice is worth but little: and only such practice is valuable from which a clear, intelligible theory can be deduced." [Bagge.]

Considering the numerous books already in existence on the subject of Choir-Training and Voice-Production, one might well be pardoned for asking the question, Is there room for yet another? The author, a choirmaster with twenty years' experience, having read a great many books on the subject, finds that those written by the highest authorities take too much for granted. As an example, most of the books by the great cathedral and other well-known choirmasters are written from the standpoint of their own experience, which experience, inasmuch as it invariably means dealing with only the very best of picked voices, boys especially, is practically valueless to the choirmaster of a small parish church in England, or a town church in America, where only the crudest of material can be obtained at the start, often without any "tradition" behind them; besides many other difficulties which a successful choirmaster of the prominent church is happily ignorant of, or does not choose to enlarge upon.

In the present little book, the author's intention is to discuss the formation of choirs, more especially boy-choirs, and their training. The book does not pretend to be exhaustive, but it is the result of many years' experience in meeting and overcoming the chief difficulties which confront the amateur and professional choirmaster.

The exercises are all explained, and have had the test of nearly twenty years' continual usage in conquering faults and producing the results desired.

The book is primarily intended for directors of choirs in our smaller towns; but, nevertheless, the exercises will be found helpful to those who have, perhaps, been obtaining results by a more circuitous method.

CONTENTS

PREFACE, pp. iv–v.

CHAPTER I, pp. 1–5.
A Talk to Choirmasters: Selection of Boys — Tests — Order — Discipline — Age — Probationers — Agreements — Payment — Deferred Pay — Music — Hints for the Practice-room.

CHAPTER II, pp. 5–7.
On Breathing — Exercises 1–3.

CHAPTER III, pp. 7–10.
On Voice-production, Exercise 1 — Registers, Exercises 2–4. Resonance.

CHAPTER IV, pp. 10–12.
On the Attack, Exercises 5–8.

CHAPTER V, pp. 12–14.
Blending the Registers, Exercises 9–12.

CHAPTER VI, pp. 15–17.
The Scales, Exercises 13–22.

CHAPTER VII, pp. 18–19.
Enunciation.

CHAPTER VIII, pp. 20–24.
Notation — Time — Sight-reading — Interval-practice, Exercises 23–24.

CHAPTER IX, pp. 24–28.
Expression — Some Words Denoting Expression — Exercises 25–26; Beating Time — Rhythm — Phrasing — Balance.

CHAPTER X, p. 29.
A Word on Men's Voices, Exercise 27.

CHAPTER XI, pp. 30–34.
Full Practice — Psalms — Hymns — Monotoning — Conclusion.

THE CHOIRMASTER'S MANUAL

CHAPTER I

A TALK TO CHOIRMASTERS

Selection of Boys, and Tests. In starting a choir a great deal of trouble in the future will be saved by a judicious selection of boys in the first place; as a preliminary test, make them sing the scale of E major on "la" or "ah" (this vowel sends the tone well forward and the scale of E takes in all the "registers"). If a boy should try to "force" his tone on the upper E, a scale a note or two higher should be tried to test his natural head-voice.

Never take a stout, heavy boy with a "break." A thin, light boy may, by diligent practice downwards, overcome this defect.

Order. It is essential that only boys of good moral character should find a place in the choir. Once admit a troublesome or unruly boy, and the whole choir will suffer from inattention in practice and irreverence in church; parochial politics or social expediency should never be allowed to have weight in the claims of a boy or man in the choir.

Discipline. The first essential of a good choirmaster is discipline; no amount of learning can compensate for the lack of it. A certain amount of self-confidence is necessary to impress those being taught that the choirmaster knows what he wants and is going to get it; at the same

time, all appearance of conceit should be suppressed, and corrections should be made without any "showing off" at the expense of a chorister, avoiding all remarks likely to hurt feelings. "Suggestions" from adult members of a choir should be ignored, if offered in public; privately, there is no harm in discussing a point with a member, for he shows his interest by bringing the matter up. There are many cases on record of an "obliging," "easy-to-get-on-with" choirmaster, who takes hints publicly offered by those he is supposed to teach, and loses his position by his own indefiniteness and failure to lead.

Age. In taking boys into a choir, considering all the preliminary training it is necessary for them to have before they are really useful, nine years old is not too young to start; five or six years' work can then be obtained before the voice "breaks."

Probationers. Whether the choir is large or small, it is advisable to have some boys even younger than nine as probationers. It is necessary that the vacancies, as they occur in the choir, should be filled up by those who have already had some training.

When regular choristers have become efficient, it is a good plan to let each become a sort of "godfather" to a probationer; each boy will readily take an interest in teaching what he knows to his probationer, and will take a certain amount of competitive pride and responsibility in trying to place *his* protégé in the choir before the others. A probationer should always stand next to his "godfather" in the practice-room, and full scope to a child's imitative powers can then be indulged in.

Apart from filling legitimate places in the choir by probationers, it is often a very good disciplinary measure to degrade a troublesome "regular," and put a probationer

in his place for a time. This is generally very effective punishment.

Agreements. In many cases in larger towns there is some trouble in keeping a boy in the choir after he has become particularly useful as a leader, or solo voice. This is often caused by the unprincipled advances, in the way of more generous fees, made by some other church, often by some layman interested in music, who fails to see how unfair it is to a choirmaster after he has expended great pains, trouble and time to secure good results, to rob him of the just fruits of his labor.

This evil is more common than is supposed, the author having suffered on more than one occasion. It seems almost incomprehensible that a so-called Christian man, knowing that a certain church has paid the tuition-fees of a rough boy for a year or more, and probably given him a small monthly payment into the bargain, can deliberately tempt the boy to turn his back on his benefactor, and rob the church he is singing for of the reward of their investment. In a measure, this evil may be obviated by having an agreement signed by the parents of a likely boy, and the rector and choirmaster, to the effect that as long as he is useful and remains in the town, he shall sing in their choir only.

Payment. In small towns it is seldom necessary to pay the boys. The parents will probably be glad their boys have an opportunity to study singing without cost; but in larger towns, where there may be opposition, it often becomes a necessity to offer a payment based on the number of practices and services required of a boy.

A sliding scale is very advantageous, owing to the fact that it gives a certain amount of ambition to a boy to excel, and put forth every endeavor to become a soloist.

Deferred Pay. A certain portion of a boy's pay should be retained, and perhaps a yearly interest might be added. Then, should a boy leave without a reasonable excuse, or otherwise violate his agreement before his voice breaks, he forfeits the whole sum, otherwise it should be given him on leaving, with possibly a good-conduct bonus. Any little help towards efficiency, such as medals or certificates, is to be encouraged, and a monthly examination in the course covered is also a great help in showing a choirmaster how much theory is really understood.

Music. Music should be carefully catalogued and numbered, and a record kept as to date from which it was used. A librarian can usually be pressed into service, and a choirmaster can help a great deal in systematizing under various headings, such as "Canticles" or "Anthems," or special seasons, etc.

Hints for the Practice-room. Use a square piano. A reed-organ is to be avoided, as boys unconsciously imitate the nasal tone. A piano gives prompt attack.

Always place poor singers next to good ones.

Teach all boys to sing solos in the practice-room; it gives confidence.

Make boys count time during symphony, and take breath one beat before singing.

Never allow the eyes to be taken off copy till finished; the mouth or face should never be covered with copy.

Devote quarter-hour to scales and exercises.

Practise softly.

Conduct often without accompaniment; this makes boys self-reliant.

Don't bother boys with technical words.

In long passages, apportion different places for breath. Don't let all breathe at once, e. g., in Handel's choruses.

Mistakes must be carefully pointed out and explained. Repetition of an error confirms it.

If it is necessary to practise in church, or to finish off any work with the organ, be careful to impress the solemnity of the *place* on the boys. Should a choirmaster himself forget he is not in the practice-room, or be guilty of joking or any inconsistency, he cannot expect his boys to be reverent. It is not so much a high standard of conduct that is required during services, as a general feeling of solemnity in and respect for the house of God whenever entered, that is necessary to inculcate into boys.

CHAPTER II

ON BREATHING

The basis of true vocal tone is the management of the breath. It is not the amount of breath *taken*, but the amount *controlled*, that tells ; but develop the lungs by every means.

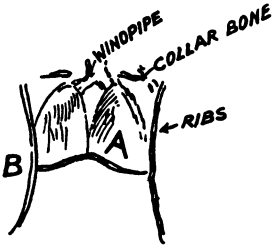
Don't spend too much time learning to control the breath alone; take vocal exercises in conjunction with breathing-exercises.

The act of breathing is passive rather than active.

The system known as "lateral-costal" is the method used with the greatest success, and the exercises in this book are based on that method.

All breathing should be deep (abdominal), and while there should be absolutely no rigidity, the chest should be raised and remain so throughout the musical phrase; *the shrinking should take place at the waist-line.*

The lateral-costal method may be described as the system of "*fixation of the diaphragm, and expansion of the side-walls of the chest.*" In explanation of this it may be useful to remark, that many teachers speak of the "inversion" or "lowering" of the diaphragm when inhaling breath. The diaphragm is a muscular shield extending across the body, separating the breathing apparatus from the digestive organs, and forming the floor of the lungs. A. Lungs. B. Diaphragm.



In other words, the expansion of the lungs when full, according to this method, forces the diaphragm from a convex to a concave position, thereby allowing room for lung-expansion, at the same time pressing down the viscera. Dr. Hulbert, in his able treatise on breathing, says, "*It is a physical impossibility* for the *diaphragm to be lowered* and the *ribs expanded* sideways *at one and the same time.*" Therefore, as the system of lowering the diaphragm makes it necessary, as the breath is expended, for it to resume its original position, and as there is no direct way to govern the even movement of this muscular shield, it often trembles, and, communicating this trembling to the lungs (which are attached to it), it produces that nervous, bleating *vibrato*, so distressing to hear. It is obvious, then, that in fixing the diaphragm we gain doubly; first, by obtaining a greater "side-rib" expansion; secondly, by avoiding the *tremolo.*

Exercise 1.

Stand steady on both feet, with chest expanded; *slightly* draw in front wall of abdomen (this fixes the diaphragm),

and without wriggling or sniffing *slowly* draw breath through the nose until lungs are well expanded. Exhale slowly through mouth. (In drawing breath through the nose the air is both warmed and filtered.)

Exercise 2.

Same as No. 1, but place hands on side-ribs and concentrate thought on their expansion when inhaling. (Choirmaster should watch the expansion, and measure boys with a piece of string or tape, and note increase after a week or so of practising.) When lungs are full, exhale explosively through mouth; boys will easily feel the sudden collapse of their expanded ribs and realize the extra space occupied by the lungs when full.

See to it that the shoulders *do not rise.* If they do, it is a sign of *clavicular* breathing, which is entirely wrong and injurious.

Exercise 3.

If shoulders do rise, practise Exercise 2, but instead of placing hands on ribs, sit in chair and firmly grasp the underside of seat with both hands; the shoulders are fixed by this means, and cannot rise.

N.B. Insist incessantly that the preliminary to all breathing is the *slight* indrawing of the front wall of the abdomen, and be careful that too much effort is not expended on it.

CHAPTER III

ON VOICE-PRODUCTION AND THE REGISTERS

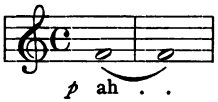
Voice-production. In the difficult matter of reminding boys when to use head-notes, the method is adopted in

this and in their own little handbook to be used in conjunction with this method,

of using *square* notes where the *head*-notes must be employed.

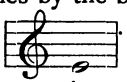
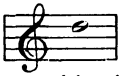
Having obtained a fair increase in expansion, slow notes on "ah" should be taken, very softly. The student should try to imagine that breath is being inhaled, a sort of yawning feeling. This has the advantage of making the voice bright and clear by raising the soft palate, and also of saving the breath.

Exercise 1.

Work to between 20 and 30 seconds. 

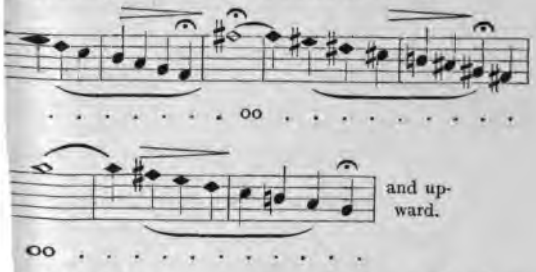
As the breath leaves the body, care must be taken that the chest remains expanded, the *waist-line alone shrinking* by the use of the abdominal muscles, and the note should be finished with the *mouth open* and *plenty of reserve breath.*

Registers. On the subject of registers much has been written. The best results have been gained by "anticipating" the head-register in *ascending*, and bringing the head-register down in *descending* scales. This is the "golden rule" of singing; in many books the first half is taught. "Never allow the lower register to be forced up."

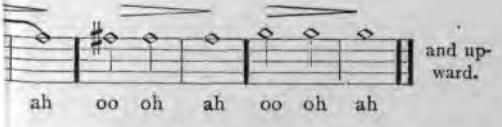
It may be taken as a safe rule never to allow the use of "chest"-tones by the boys. These notes are naturally those below E  . Out of a mass of evidence, it is also safe to commence the head-voice on D:  a convenient letter, easily remembered by boys as standing for "danger." It is the lively "*anticipation*" *of the head-tones* that insures good tone always.

Exercise 2.

The best vowel for head-tones is "oo." Take F on

e, *softly and clearly*, then sing descending
altering the feeling in head or throat.

ently, taking a semitone higher each time.
le to sing "oo" as an upper medium note on
st cases. If a clear head-tone is not obtained
aids the effort to place the right foot slightly
ıg the weight of the body on it, at the same
the head a little, and thinking of the top of
th the writer, this has proved efficacious in

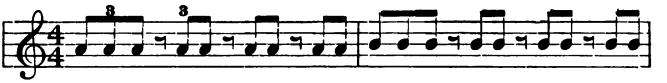
ained clear head-notes on A♯, B, or C, or as
sh to train the boys, care must be taken that
vel-tone does not become habitual with all
o avoid this use the following:



his, take care that the tones on "oh" and
ouder than on "oo." These three vowel-
gradually merged into one another, "oh"
ıe same position as "oo." This exercise
eal feeling of breath-control, especially on

the lower notes, as "ah" produces a much louder tone than "oo" if left to itself.

To get rid of breathy sounds, practise Exercise 4.

Exercise 4.

(Do not sing these notes *staccato*, but as short as possible. Feel tones are made by a sort of "click" at the vocal cords, not by action of ribs. Do not allow the ribs to move until after the tone is made.)

Resonance. The registers of a voice are divided according to the feeling produced in the singer. The "lower medium" notes sound as if produced in the back of the mouth; the "upper medium," in the front of the mouth above the front teeth; the "head" tones are felt in the highest part of the back of the head.

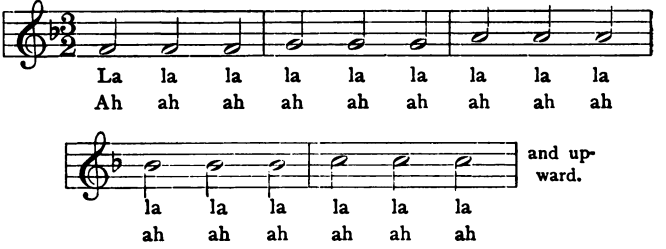
The mouth is the chief resonance-chamber, and the wider it is open the greater the resounding space and the louder the voice; the pharynx and head-cavities all act as resonators, reinforcing the tones by the addition of overtones. "Ah" is the best vowel-sound for producing resonance.

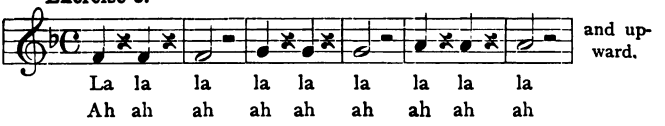
CHAPTER IV

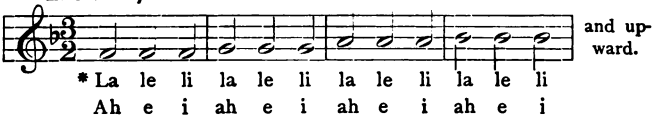
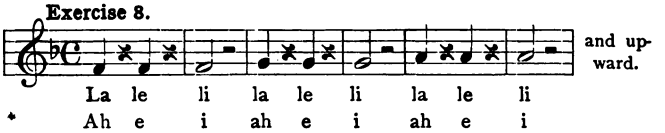
ON THE ATTACK

Good attack is of vital importance. To accomplish a good attack, a slight, sharp inward movement of the abdomen is necessary. Practise notes of scale on "la." The

advantage of "la" over "ah" as usually taught for attack is, that the consonant sends the tone forward with the tongue; the disadvantage is, that the consonant often deceives. The best method is to practise first on "la," then on the vowel-sound alone.

Exercise 5.

Exercise 6.



Exercise 7.

Exercise 8.

(Keep tongue as flat as possible, and mouth open for "le" just as wide as for "la." Most boys want to close it. The higher up the scale, the more open the mouth.

* Pronounce *lah*, *lay*, *lee*, and *ah*, *ay*, *ee*.

All consonants must be made by tongue or lips.

DON'T MOVE THE JAW. Fix the eyes on some spot in the room during vocalizing; it helps to keep head and jaws still.)

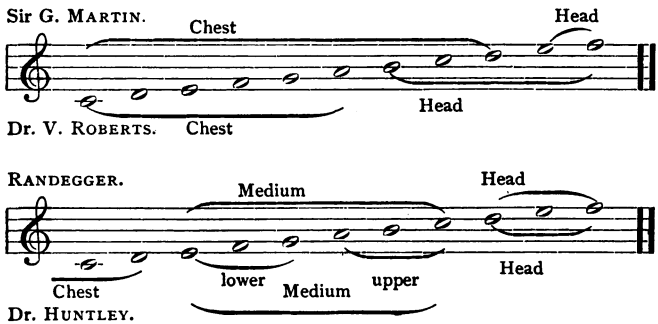
In Exs. 6 and 8, take breath between each attack. In taking breath the vocal cords must be open, and in attacking the note brought sharply together again.

CHAPTER V

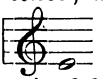
BLENDING THE REGISTERS

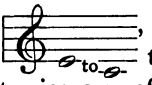
In Chapter III the head-tones were attacked and *brought down* the scale; on this principle all the registers are *blended*, and the voice made even.

Below are the various ideas held by some leading choirmasters as to the "division-notes" or boundaries of the various registers in the boy's voice:

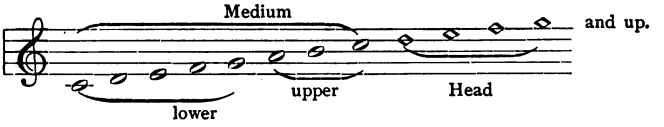


The registers in a boy's voice are *chest*, *medium* (upper and lower), and *head*. In the first example the word

chest is used for medium tones; as before mentioned, the real chest-tone below E  has no place in a boy's voice.

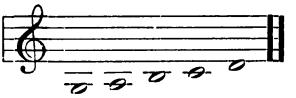
The best results are gained by a trifling variation of these, with a leaning towards Randegger's and Dr. Huntley's; in fact, if the medium register is carried down over E (first line) to C (middle line) 

, and the use of chest-voice abandoned altogether, we obtain an ideal voice. The chest-voice can, of course, always be used for certain effects, but is better left out altogether. Therefore, we get the following scale:



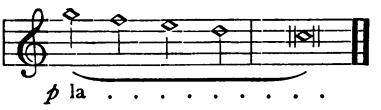
(Lower Medium Resonance felt in highest part of back of mouth, on hard palate. Upper Medium felt on top of mouth, well forward. Head Resonance felt at the highest part of back of head.)

Voices trained on this plan blend much better with women's voices, and don't stand out, but add brilliancy only.

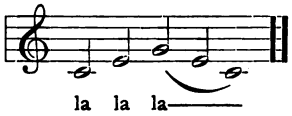
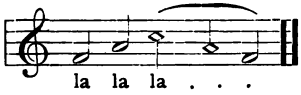
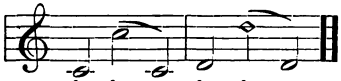
Contraltos (or altos) use "chest" and "medium" registers only. The chest-note resonance is felt in the lower or upper chest, the change occurring on Middle C for *altos or contraltos only.* 

The principal break in the voice is between "upper medium" and "head," occurring on D; the break is very seldom noticed between lower and upper medium.

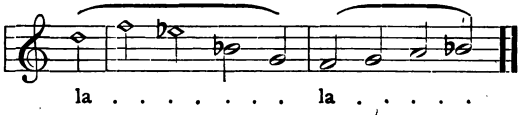
Exercise 9.

Take any head-note and train downward over the "break."

When the lower note can be taken with the same resonance as the upper, the scale-passage from lower note upward may be attempted, always singing *piano.*

Exercise 10.

Right up the scale.

Get into head-register sooner than is necessary; for instance, in the following take top C in head and bring down, as described in Ex. 9.

Exercise 11.

"Attack" first two notes, and after holding the upper octave a few seconds, glide to lower octave, striking note *very softly*, bringing upper register down. The soft ending is the test in this exercise. This exercise also prevents "scooping" in the first place, and teaches the use of high register on low notes.

Exercise 12.



Start in head-voice, sing very softly. In so doing, the voice will *unconsciously* get into the medium register, which is what is required.

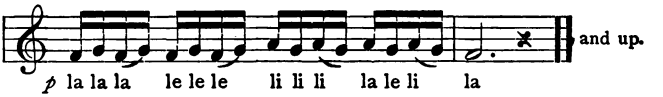
Wrong head-tone production is combined with a loss of all facial expression, a fixed chin, and a stony eye.

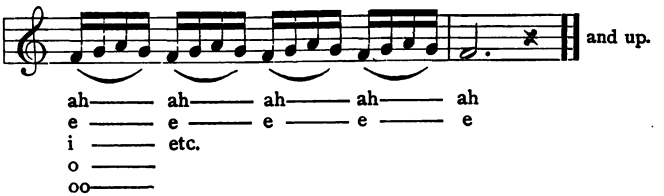
CHAPTER VI

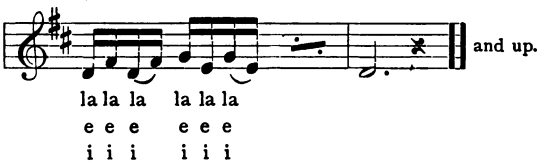
THE SCALES

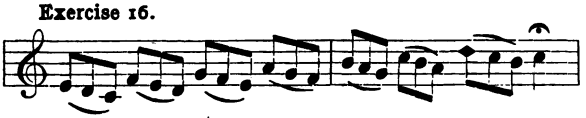
Sing all major scales from C upward.

Exercise 13.

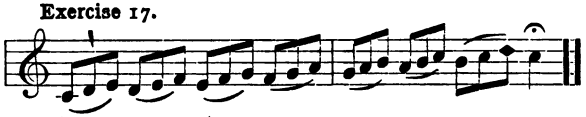
For words and loose jaw.

The jaw must be kept quite still and feel as if floating; the *tongue must form consonants.* Sing second time *mf.*

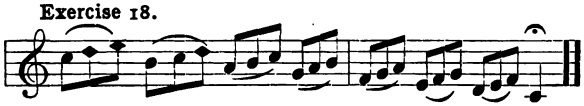
Exercise 14.

Twice each vowel, slowly at first, or the notes will not be distinct.

Exercise 15.

Major thirds are very hard to sing. Boys often get a little flat on them.

Exercise 16.

a a etc.
e e etc.
i i etc.
o o etc.
oo oo etc.

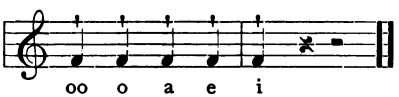
Slowly at first. See that the *middle note* is distinct.

Exercise 17.

a a etc.
e e etc.
i i etc.
o o etc.
oo oo etc.

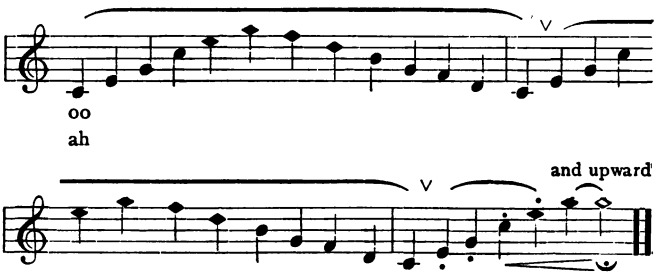
Exercise 18.

a
e
i
o
oo

In Exercises 16, 17, and 18 care must be taken not to unduly accentuate the first note of the group of three.

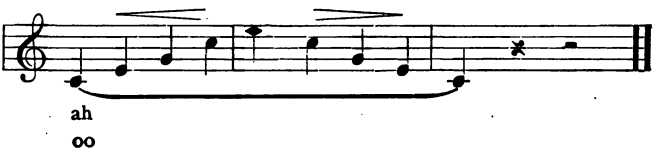
Exercise 19.

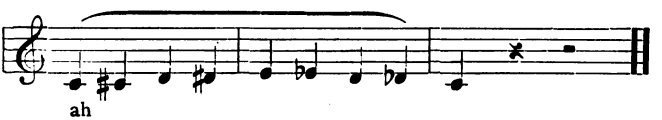
Staccato.

The *staccato* must be effected by a sharp inward movement of the abdomen, similar to an attack (see Chapter IV); but no breath must be taken between the notes.

Exercise 20.



Sing on all vowels, softly, paying particular attention to the *staccato* and slurred passages. Pause on last note.

Exercise 21.

Exercise 22.

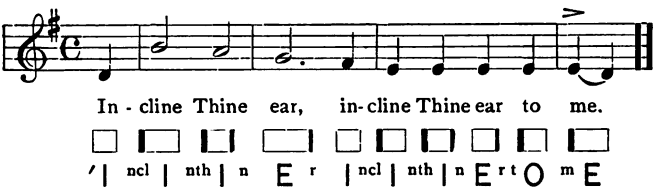
Very slowly.

NOTE. Sometimes a fuller resonance is obtained by using "na" for vocalizing; this combination is also very useful for making the tongue active.

CHAPTER VII

ENUNCIATION

To a stranger the service of the Church as sung and said by many choirs is wholly unintelligible; the common fault is the saying of the responses, etc., too quickly, on the reciting-note especially, owing to the inertia of the muscles of the tongue and mouth. In the Gloria Patri we hear, "Glorybe t'the Father-ran' t'the Son, "or "Glory be to + Father." Further, "As 'twas beginning," or, "As it was in + beginning." Which is just the elision of *little words*, or the running of one word into another. All words should be said or sung distinctly, in no case should words be so gabbled that it is impossible to use the tongue quickly enough to form clean consonants. It is a good plan to slightly accent the word "in" in "As it was IN the beginning."

All words such as "may," "day," "say," "night," etc., must be finished *without any upward movement of the jaw*, otherwise "mayee," "dayee," "sayee," "ni-eet," will be the result. All the regular church responses should be carefully gone through with regard to pronunciation, and with a little care one would not so often hear the responses to the litany: "Web 'seach Thee t'yeerus;" "Good Lor' dliverus."

We can hardly exaggerate the effect of a consonant, unless it be "s" or "f," and such diphthongs as "ch" and "sh." Nevertheless, the final consonant of a word or syllable must never be heard unless the *very end* of the *value* of the note is reached on the *vowel-sound*. The shaded parts in the squares of the following example will give some idea of the proportionate value of the Consonants to the Vowels.

Notwithstanding the remark about the rolling of "r's," where a word ends with an "r" immediately followed by a word commencing with a vowel, the "r" must be clearly rolled — *clear* of the following vowel,— and a special little "attack" made on the following vowel.

Incline Thine ear-r, incline Thine ear to me.

Not

Incline Thine earincline.

Glory be to the Father..r, And to the Son.

Not

Glory be to the Fatherand to the Son.

Care must also be taken in the pronunciation of such words as fire: "FI're," not "fyer." Also when one word ends with a letter that the next commences with, special pains must be taken to pronounce both.

The people that trust in Thee,

Often sounds

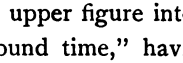
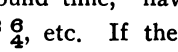
The people tha' trust in Thee.

"R's" may be rolled at the commencement of a word, *seldom at the end.*

CHAPTER VIII

NOTATION, SIGHT-READING, ETC.

Most choirmasters, with but two practice-days a week, find themselves too fully occupied to teach the rudiments of music, time and sight-reading to the boys; but it is in the end a longer journey not to attempt it, than to spend a little extra time on these subjects in the first place. Choir-boys should understand the (treble clef), the values and shapes of notes and rests, sharps and flats, the staff, lines and spaces, dots, ties, bars, and the marks of expression in common use (a list of which will be found in the next chapter).

Time. The upper figure shows the number of beats in a measure; the lower figure, the kind or value of note.  Any upper figure into which 3 goes more than once, is "compound time," having so many groups of three notes  , etc. If these upper figures are divided by 3, *the number of beats in a measure is the result.* Thus divided by 3 gives two beats or groups of *three notes each;* as three notes always equal one *dotted* note of the next higher value, equals 2 beats of dotted quarter-notes, 4 being the next higher value to 8.

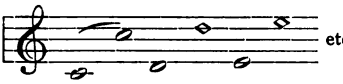
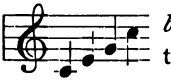
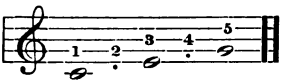
Boys should now be made to fill up measures on the blackboard to which various time-signatures have been set, and when singing should beat time, commencing with two in a measure.

Always teach boys to accent the "*down*-stroke."

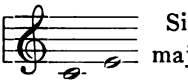
A common error in time is to sing *soft passages slower than written.*

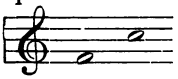
Sight-Reading. The question of sight-reading offers a large field, but the general principle of using easy intervals

first can readily be enlarged so as to suit particular cases. Starting with the Major scale, the notes "one above" or "one below" are easy to recognize. It is not advisable at this stage to point out the different qualities of a "Second," as long as the interval is correctly named.

The next easy interval to recognize and sing is the octave. This has already been seen in Exercise 11. An octave always occupies one line and one space with three lines between:

Sing the common chord *by ear;* explain that the notes sung between the octave are the Third and Fifth. Show how, if the notes start on a line, the Third and Fifth will also be on a line:



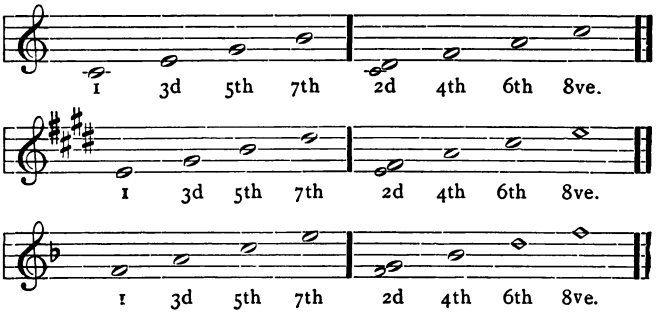
NOTE. In singing the common chord it may be well perhaps thus early to point to the fact that the three notes are super-imposed "Thirds," and the higher Third is smaller than the lower. In other words, the major chord is a minor Third on a major Third. By reversing the order of these Thirds, a minor chord is sounded. The author has often found it helpful to explain the principal difference of Major and Minor (especially "Thirds") at the earliest opportunity.

Now, sing C, *think* D, and sing E: Sing C, *think* D and E and sing F. The major Sixth and Seventh are always hard to sing. To reach a Sixth, strike the Fifth, already learned in the common chord, and go up one, then *think* the Fifth and sing the Sixth. When the Third, Fifth and Octave of the common chord are sung readily, the singing a Fourth becomes merely a matter — for the time being — of *thinking* the Third and adding a semitone; similarly with a Sixth — *thinking* the Fifth, — and with the Seventh, *thinking* the

Octave and subtracting a semitone. In a short time the *thinking* of other tones will not be required.

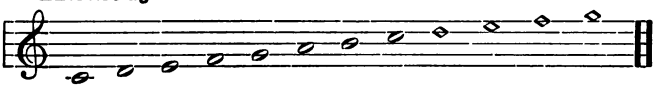
It should be clearly understood that the *even* intervals occupy a space *and* a line; the *uneven* intervals either two spaces or two lines. It is readily grasped at sight that  cannot be a 4th or a 6th.

To reach a 7th, strike the octave, and come back one, then sing the 7th direct. The addition or subtraction of a semitone, by the use of a sharp or flat, can be practised, and the names of keys and numbers of sharps and flats can all be added. (See "The Choir-Boy's Manual," companion-book to this.)

When the choir can sing the seven intervals of the octave, starting from a given keynote, they will, if attentive, count up from any other keynote and sing equally well.

On the blackboard mark a keynote, then all the *uneven* intervals, 3d, 5th and 7th, then the *even* ones, 2d, 4th, 6th, 8th.

Pupils should now be able to name the interval from the keynote, by placing a series of notes on the board and pointing to them, thus:

Exercise 23.



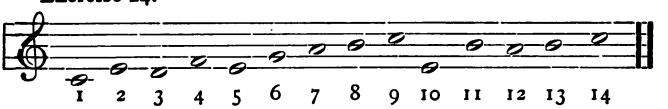
Taking C as keynote, what interval is A? Sing it. Point out repeatedly that C to A, being a line *and* a space, must be an *even* interval.

Continue exercise in the following manner, pointing to notes:

C as keynote; what is E? Sing it.
F as keynote; what is A? Sing it.
D as keynote; what is G? Sing it.

And so on. This exercise repeated regularly will soon make the choir recognize all intervals, and sing those of the major scale correctly.

NOTE. After the key-signatures are understood, the quality of intervals can be explained, and *sight-reading from the next note*, and not from the keynote, can be practised until perfection is gained. In the following exercise, for instance,

Exercise 24.

every interval could easily be sung as from the keynote C, according to the diatonic scale; but taking such notes as an interval above or below *the note preceding it*, it becomes plain (if only a *major* third has been learned, as a "line to next line," or "space to next space" interval), that D to F, or E to G, will be sung *major* until the *minors* are taught, or rather the key-signatures. Then, if it is recognized that the key of D requires two sharps (F and C), from D to F "natural" must be half a tone less. Intervals should be practised both from the keynote and back.

In reading from the "next note," that note is looked upon as a temporary keynote. It is unnecessary in a short

work to enlarge on this; on the principle of sight-reading from probably a novel point of view, enough has been written for a choirmaster to proceed to the highest pitch of perfection.

CHAPTER IX

EXPRESSION

Light and shade are but two of many points that go to make up "expression" in music. Attack, rhythm, phrasing, color and tone, and balance, are essential factors of a good performance.

An author has described singing as the "interpretation of a text by means of musical tones produced by the human voice:" — *interpretation!*

Inspiration can do a great deal toward this happy result without elaborate technique, but technique without inspiration, that is, without some feeling of the words used, results only in "woodenness."

For expression, the singer's aim should be to sing a *word* rather than make a *tone.*

A great hindrance in educating the people to a recognition of the emotional in music, either harmonic or melodic, is the stupid habit of making one tune, because of its meter, "do" for various strikingly dissimiliar poems and subjects, a fault common to many hymnals.

A story is told of a certain person who insisted on singing "Nearer, My God, to Thee" to the tune associated with "Robin Adair."

For the initial expression of words, the choirmaster will do well to read aloud the text, and try to convey the intended expression.

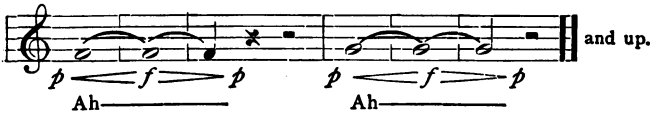
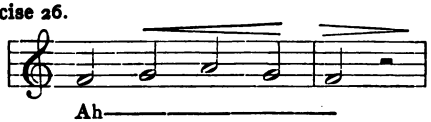
SOME WORDS DENOTING EXPRESSION

Grave. Very slowly and solemnly.
Adagio. Slowly.
Lento. Slow, not so slow as Adagio.
Andante. Moving moderately.
Vivace. Quick and lively.
Presto. Very quickly.
Allegro. Cheerfully, rapidly.
Allegretto. Moderately quick.
Con moto. With movement.
Stringendo. Hurrying.
Ritardando. Holding back the pace.
Rallentando. Slackening the pace.
Accelerando. Hastening.
Forte. Loud. (*f*)
Piano. Soft. (*p*)
Crescendo. Increase sound gradually.
Decrescendo. Decrease sound gradually.
Sforzando. Forcing the sound. (*sfz*)

In the *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, take care that the whole chorus swell or diminish gradually:

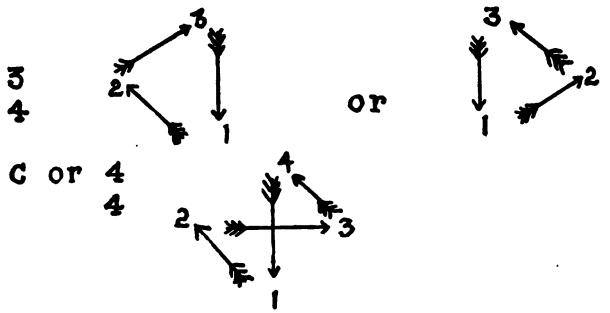
p < *f*, not <; *f* > *p*, not >

Exercise 25.

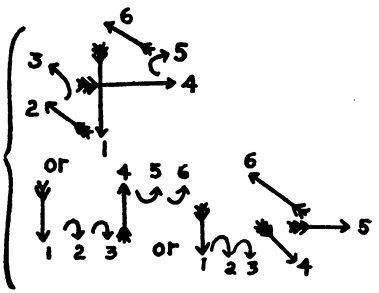
Increase sound by using abdominal muscles only.

Exercise 26.

The climax of any *crescendo* should be an accented note. Attack has already been dealt with in Chapter IV.

An *accelerando* should be an imperceptible quickening, as of a train moving out of a station; and a *rallentando* can be learned by watching the gradual ceasing of the drops of water when a tap is turned off.

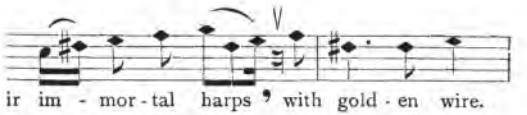
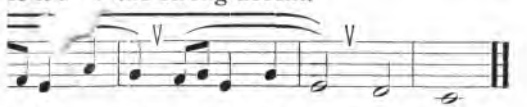
Rhythm. The chief beat or accent in a measure is the first. Secondary accents occur on the odd beats afterwards. The first beat is always a *down*-stroke with the baton. The following diagram will show the more usual ways of beating times.



$\frac{6}{8}$ (in slow time, when the six beats are taken).



t time, which is two dotted quarters ↓2 ↑2
), only two beats are necessary, thus: ↓1 ↑1
cial accents, such as *fz*, *ffz*, *fp* must be taken
to the loudness or softness of the passage in
ccur.

As a general rule, breath should never be
a phrase. The first note of a phrase takes
d the last note is usually a trifle shorter than

w the breath to be taken *before* accent in long
te it *over* the strong accent.

er one or two phrases in such a case; to
s would spoil the effect of such a phrase:

ssful choirmaster will keep an eye on all the
, which often occur differently in different
observance of the preliminary accents, if not
kes for crisp and bright entries of fugue-sub-
itative" passages, examples of which can be
modern services.

Balance. The question of balance must be left to the taste of the choirmaster; but it is very necessary to give a general rule for those singing, to know when they individually are singing too loudly for the surrounding tone. The following will be found of some assistance:

Never sing so loud that you cannot hear the other parts.

Many well-known writers have given an ideally balanced choir in numbers, but it is practically impossible for anyone to lay down a hard and fast law, for the simple reason that in speaking of tenors, one has to know whether they are *robusto* or *lyric*, the former having a much more powerful effect in choral work than the latter. The same remark applies to *high basses* and the *basso profundo;* especially does this apply to trebles of a flute-like head-quality, and to those boys that have that big, hornlike voice. But, for what they may be worth, the following numbers are suggested.

Thirty-six voices, eighteen to twenty-four boys, twelve to fourteen men, light tenors on the Decani side, heavy on the Cantoris; and, having obtained these numbers, the question of balance is still one which every individual member must feel more or less intuitively. Dr. Coward suggests twenty-two trebles, twenty altos, nineteen tenors, twenty-one basses, which he calls a "bright sky and a firm foundation."

The question of color is determined a great deal by the use of the resonators, and must be studied privately. Nevertheless, if the right mental attitude is established, and the true sense of the words duly appreciated, a great deal of tone-color can be obtained by an appropriate shading of the voice — now bright, now sombre. The thing to be avoided is the "unemotional" quality of tone.

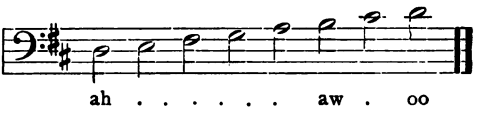
CHAPTER X

A WORD ON MEN'S VOICES

For the "mixed" voice, the following exercise will be useful for basses who have difficulty in getting a mixed voice — the *voce mista* of the Italians.

Sing the scale on "ah," changing to "aw" on or about B natural, and endeavor to "fill the mouth" with sound.

Exercise 27.



Tenors use the same exercise, changing to "aw" on C♯ or D.

When these notes are obtained, practise the sliding vowels oo–oh–ah with the boys.

The following faults of tone are due to the causes named after them:

Too hollow sound: — Pharnyx too widely open.

Choked sound: — Throat muscles are rigid.

Guttural sound: — Tongue is curled up or stiffened.

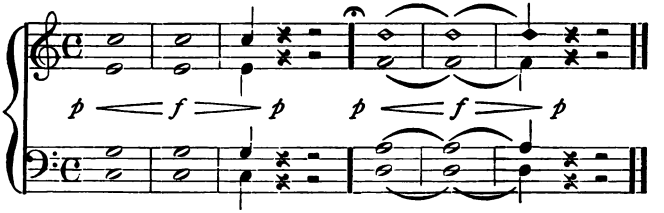
Dental ring sound: — Mouth insufficiently opened.

Beware of too much nasal resonance. It is simply the effect of *wrong direction* in resonance, but is the cause of a great deal of unpleasantness, especially in men's voices, and is developed by many teachers through excessive practice on the syllable "ni."

CHAPTER XI

FULL PRACTICE

Practise soft chords with *crescendo* and *diminuendo*.



Arrange work before starting.

Allow boys and men to sit down occasionally. Too much standing is fatiguing, and one does not get such good results towards the end of practice.

On trying new music, it is advisable to take it at a slower tempo than indicated, and without regard to expression, etc., to begin with.

Begin practice with uninteresting items, as the choir is fresh, and, let us hope, keen.

Never repeat a piece in practice without giving a reason. Do not go through the whole composition to correct a single error.

Practise hymns *piano*, except where a special effect in expression is required. It saves the voice, and good *piano* singing is a rarity.

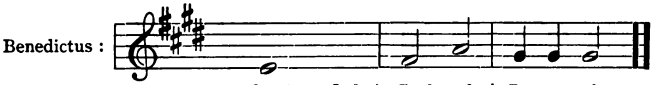
Psalms. In very few churches in America are the Psalms sung regularly, but in many the Canticles are chanted, especially the "Venite." It is a good plan to read over the preface of the Psalter to the choir. The most important point is, that all the words in front of the *accented* note, called the "recitation," must be sung evenly

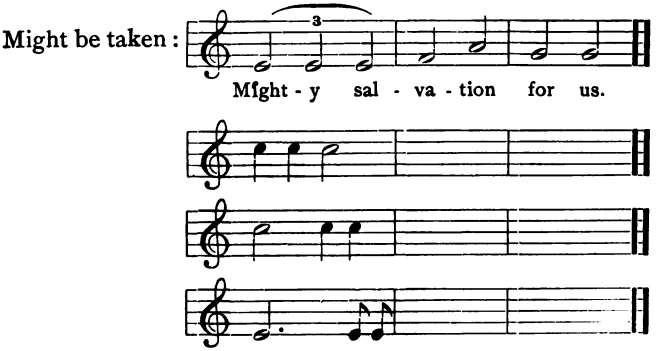
with good expression, and when the *accented* note is reached, the *first note of the chant, as written*, is taken in *strict time*, the vertical lines corresponding to the bars in music. Each measure has two beats. Whenever three or more syllables have to be sung against the two half-notes often filling a measure, the measure must be divided so as to accommodate the increase of syllables. When three syllables are in a measure, it is an invariable custom to put a period after the first, or first two of them, thus:

"And to re | member · His | holy | covenant"

to show where the half-measure is. In this case, the two half-notes 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 being sung ♩ ♩ 𝅗𝅥 the counter-effect is often marked 𝆑 𝆑 𝆑

If there is no syllable after the accented note, it is held for two whole beats.



The length of accented note when other words or syllables follow it, is often left to discretion.

The same thing may be said of verse 3. In verse 4 the word "savèd" should not be divided evenly , but the three-quarter measure given to the accented syllable: This is an invariable rule for *two syllables.*

It is NOT advisable to mind stops in the ordinary way. A slight stress on words, as in reading, suffices to give point. * = breath-sign; and although minding of stops is often advocated, on *no account* must one be noticed *after* the accented note, or the "*two-beat rhythm*" *will be destroyed.*

Hymns. In hymn-singing a different view of phrasing comes to light. So many hymns without any stops at the ends of lines almost compel a stop, by reason of the cadence in the music, but in these cases *no stop must be made.* Hundreds of examples can be adduced, but one, hymn No. 82, "Weary of earth," must suffice:

V. 2. So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land?

Most choirs pause at "stand," thinking only of the musical effect and ignoring the words. This hymn demands a breathing-place in the middle of lines, too, and it will be an interesting experiment for any choirmaster to carefully read over the words of this hymn, mentally marking the proper breathing-places, and then get the choir to sing it, and note the *unanimous faults* in this direction.

The time of hymn-tunes should be slightly altered, if the verse demands a different treatment, and stops in many cases must be marked to give pointed expression to the words; e. g., in "The Church's one foundation," No. 491:

V. 1. Last two lines *rall. e dim.*

V. 2, line 4. Mind commas, and accent "one Lŏrd, one Fafth, one Bĭrth."

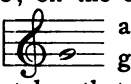
V. 3, line 6. "The cry goes up" [pause; then *ff*], "How long."

V. 5. Carry line 1 to line 2 with one phrase.

Line 6. Stop after "Lord."

Line 7. Stop after "them."

Most words may be analyzed like this, to the edification of the listener and the musical benefit of the singers.

Monotoning. Monotoning should always be taken with the "head-voice." The carrying down of the head-register causes no fatigue; on the other hand, the "chest" tones often used on  are wearing and wearying to the highest degree.

Care must be taken that the attack of the new sentence should not be slurred up to ("scooped"), but the tone continued evenly throughout. It is not necessary to breathe after each sentence in the Lord's prayer, for instance.

All work should be finished with plenty of breath to spare. If there is no breath the throat closes.

CONCLUSION

No congregation can be expected to listen to music badly sung. One of the essentials of good music is thoroughness of detail.

No two voices are alike, so after the main principles are grasped there is excellent opportunity for the application of original ideas.

Practice may be a benefit, or a detriment. It must be guided by understanding, if it is to benefit. An exercise has no value unless the principle involved be clearly understood.

In conclusion, this book does not intend to say all there is to say on a vast subject. Its purpose will be ful-

filled if it induces choirmasters to train boys with clear head-tones, even registers, and clear articulation. Many other excellent works dealing with the theory of music, the physiological side of voice-production, and exercises for producing facility, etc., are in existence and may easily be obtained, if one wishes to pursue the study of voice-production further. Should this desire be awakened in anyone, this little work will not have been written in vain.

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